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Thursday, July 22, 2004



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Ski area to use snowmelt to generate electricity

ASPEN, Colo. (AP) — In what officials say is an industry first, a small power plant has been installed at Snowmass Ski Area to generate electricity from melting snow.

A small hydroelectric turbine will be fed by the mountain's snowpack, with the water eventually returned to a stream.

The plant should generate 115 kilowatts of electricity, enough to power 40 homes and prevent the equivalent of 500,000 pounds of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere, said Auden Schendler, director of environmental affairs for Aspen Skiing Co.

"It's the first of its kind in the industry," Schendler said Tuesday.

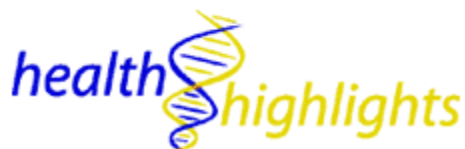
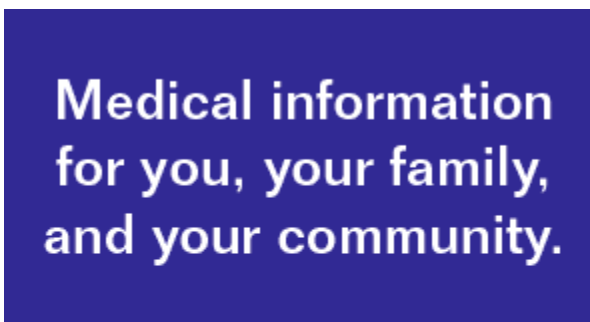
The turbine will operate primarily from May through August, and any excess electricity will be sold to Holy Cross Energy. The ski company hopes to generate about \$12,000 annually.

The company already uses about 3 percent renewable energy to power its operations; a lift at the top of Snowmass is powered purely by wind turbines.

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